

Annual Report 2011

MILWAUKEE

JUSTICE

CENTER



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Dear Concerned Citizens,

Thank you for your interest in the vital public service mission of the Milwaukee Justice Center. These pages succinctly describe that mission, why our community needs the MJC, and how it is addressing that need.

Many thousands of our fellow citizens who are faced with civil legal problems, and who don't qualify under the economic guidelines for legal aid, nonetheless can't begin to afford private attorneys. And due to the severe budgetary pressures on our legal aid organizations, more than 80% of those eligible for free legal services can't actually obtain them.

These are the folks who turn to the Milwaukee Justice Center for help navigating the legal maze. In its first two full calendar years of operation, with limited space and clinic hours, the MJC has assisted almost 15,600 unrepresented persons. With expanded hours in 2012, we can expect the MJC to have an even more positive impact going forward. Based on 2011 performance, for every dollar spent on the MJC through charitable contributions the community received more than eight dollars of value in the form of volunteer legal assistance. On a national level, the American Bar Association recognized the MJC with the inaugural Partnerships for Success Award in 2011.

Notwithstanding its success, however, the truth is that the MJC's continued existence is far from a sure thing. Simply put, survival of the MJC depends on the financial support of those who live and work in our community, and who recognize that meaningful access to justice, regardless of economic circumstances, is and must continue to be a fundamental tenet of our society.

We request your help in assuring this principle is a reality and not just a principle. Your donation to the Milwaukee Justice Center not only helps serve the basic legal needs of the most vulnerable in Milwaukee County, but also tangibly improves the effectiveness and efficiency of our court system for the benefit of the community as a whole. Please contact Jim Temmer, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Bar Association at 414-276-5934, or simply send your contribution to the Milwaukee Bar Association Foundation, 424 East Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

We thank you again for your time and interest, and for your willingness to consider supporting the Milwaukee Justice Center.

Charles Barr, Co-Chair
Attorney at law



Beth E. Hanan, Co-Chair
Gass Weber Mullins LLC



MILWAUKEE JUSTICE CENTER COMMITTEE

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Gass Weber Mullins LLC

Charles Barr, Co-Chair
Attorney at law

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Ayame Metzger
Legal Director

Joesph Riggensch
Public Ally

OVERVIEW

The **Milwaukee Justice Center (MJC)** was founded as a collaboration and partnership between the Milwaukee Bar Association, the MBA Foundation, Marquette University Law School, and Milwaukee County. It is a volunteer based community service project founded on the premise that everyone deserves meaningful access to the justice system, regardless of their economic situation or access to legal services.

Although many individuals may qualify for legal aid in Milwaukee County, organizations that provide free legal services can only serve a small percentage of the population. In fact, **more than 80%** of those eligible for free legal aid cannot obtain such services. Additionally, many families who would be considered at an economic disadvantage exceed the threshold for legal aid, and cannot even begin to

afford hiring private counsel. These families are forced to access the courts alone when legal issues arise.

Since opening its doors in April 2009, the MJC has been working to address this dramatic gap in legal services. In difficult economic times, volunteer attorneys, paralegals, and law students have strived to assist almost **15,600 unrepresented individuals** in navigating the legal system and gaining access to justice. In 2011, the MJC served 8,072 clients with the help of **368 volunteers** contributing **7,577 pro bono hours**. The outstanding work being done at the MJC has now received national recognition by winning the inaugural Partnerships for Success Award at the 2011 American Bar Association Annual Meeting.

MJC MISSION

The Milwaukee Justice Center utilizes volunteers to address the unmet legal needs of Milwaukee's low-income unrepresented litigants through court based programs and resources.



SELF HELP DESKS

Volunteers at the Self-Help Desks aid unrepresented litigants in the completion of legal forms and provide step-by-step filing instructions for filing family forms. Legal advice is not provided at the Self Help Desks.

BRIEF LEGAL ADVICE AND REFERRAL CLINICS

The Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic at the Milwaukee Justice Center is a free, walk-in clinic that provides information and referral service in all areas of civil law. The brief legal advice clinics are staffed by volunteer attorneys working with and supervising law students. The Clinic does not take cases or represent clients in an ongoing manner.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments are scheduled in half hour increments and allow unrepresented litigants to meet with volunteers to complete paperwork.

WEBSITE

Launched in October 2010, www.milwaukeejusticecenter.com provides forms and filing instructions for divorce, child support, custody, small claims, foreclosure, landlord-tenant disputes, Chapter 128, and name changes for unrepresented litigants. The site also provides general information about the MJC, copies of annual reports, testimonials, and volunteer opportunities. The Website receives over 5400 page views monthly.

BY THE NUMBERS

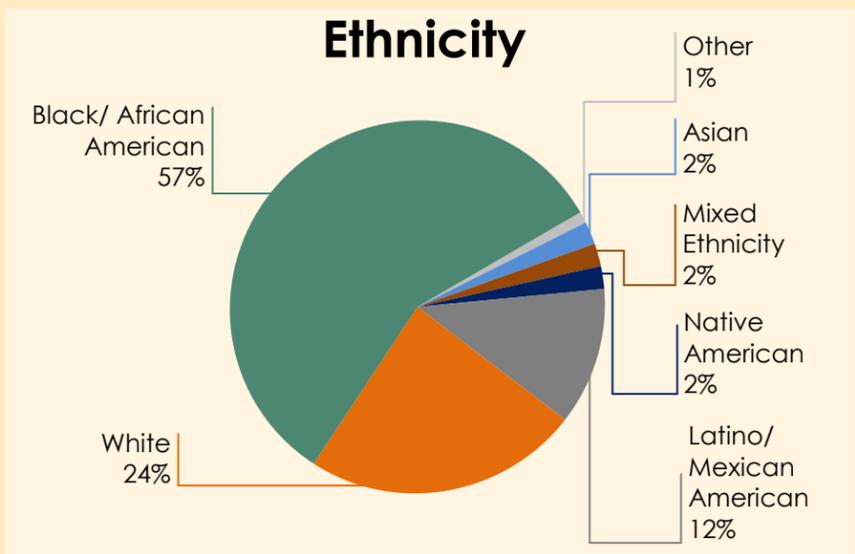
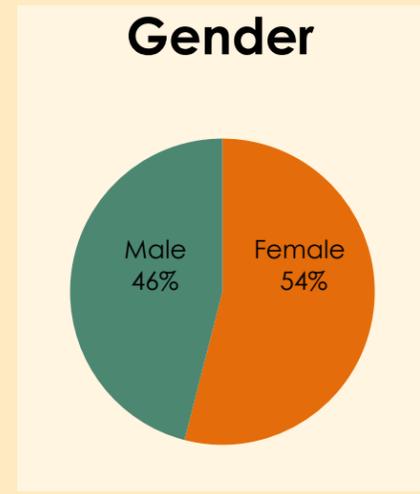
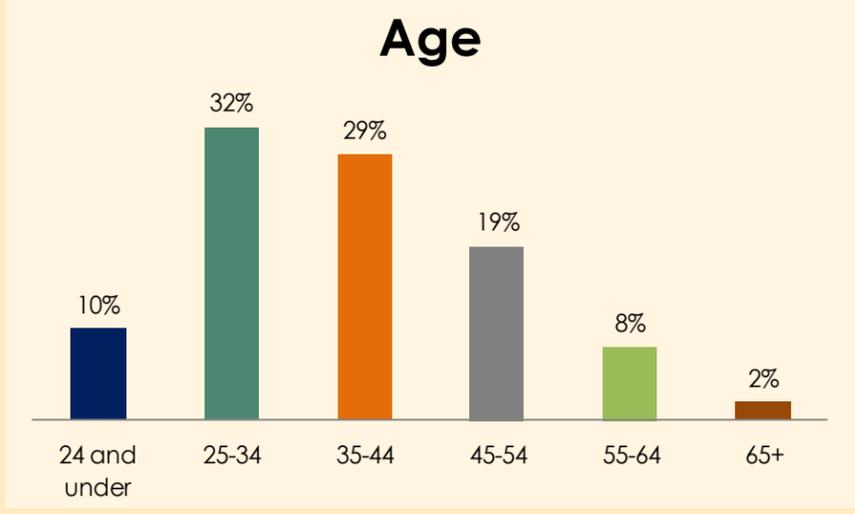
Clients Served:
8072

of
Volunteers:
368

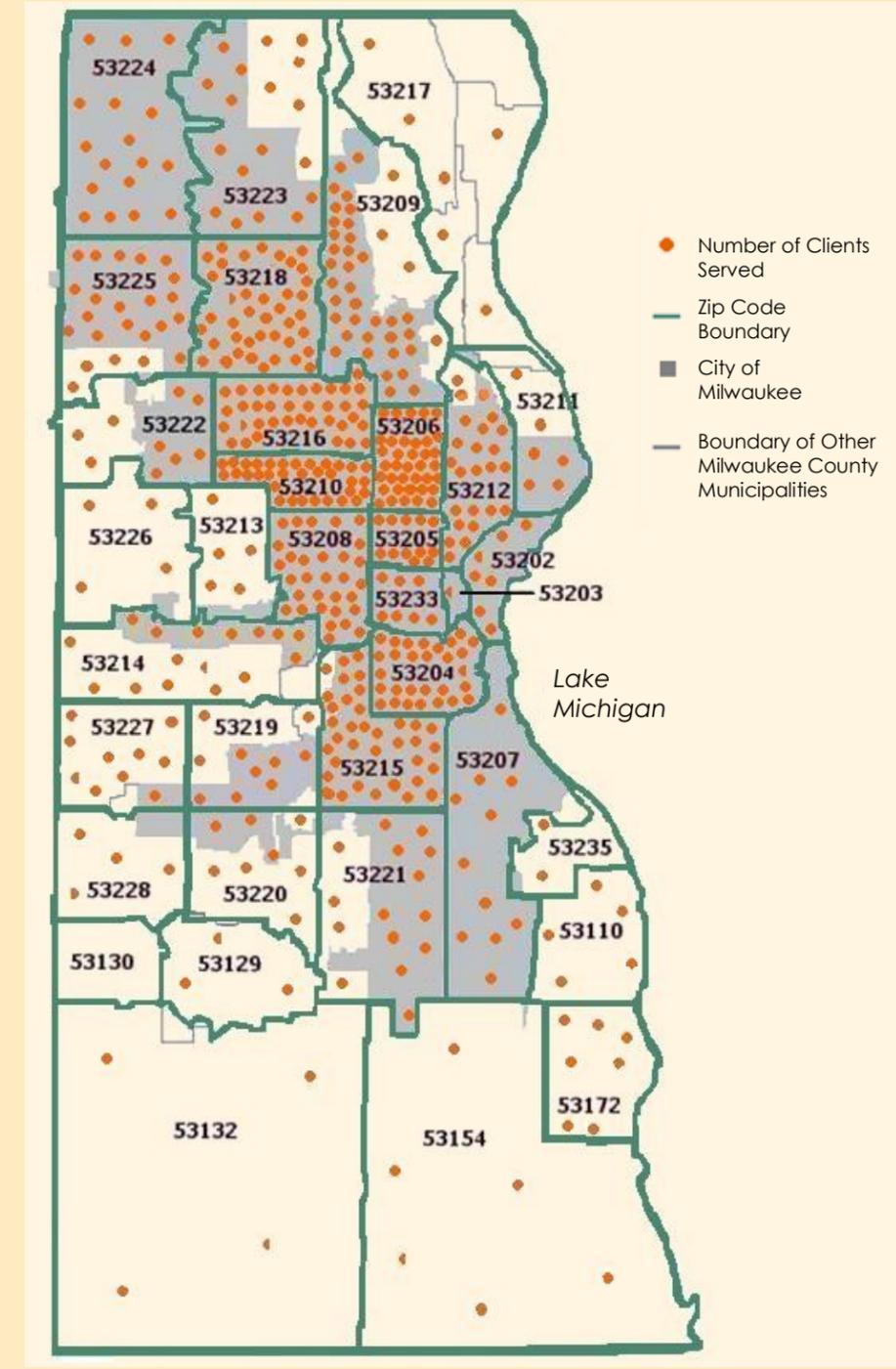
Value of
Volunteer
Service:
\$653,643

of Pro Bono
Hours: **7577**

Average # of
Pro Bono Hours
per
Volunteer: **20.59**



CLIENT ZIP CODE MAP

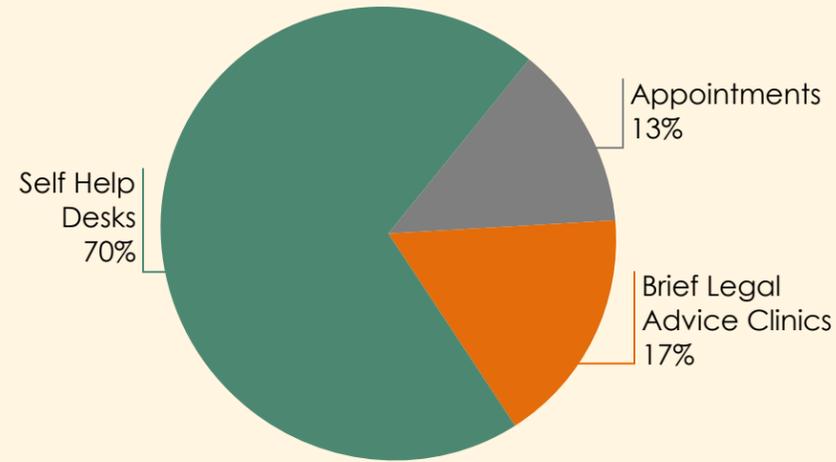


Zip Code	No. of Clients
53203	6
53235	21
53130	25
53132	36
53228	36
53129	37
53226	43
53213	47
53110	48
53154	56
53217	59
53211	62
53202	66
53172	70
53233	71
53220	81
53222	92
53227	94
53219	103
53207	109
53205	123
53221	150
53214	155
53224	166
53223	183
53225	229
53212	238
53204	286
53208	313
53210	330
53215	358
53216	365
53206	372
53209	400
53218	415
TOTAL	5245*

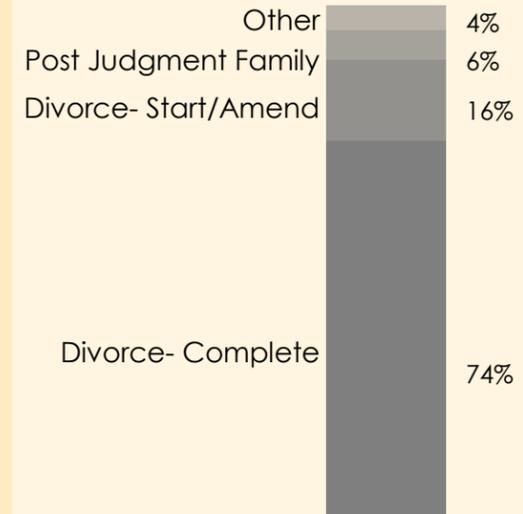
*65% of clients served, self-reported their Zip Code.

CLIENT SERVICES

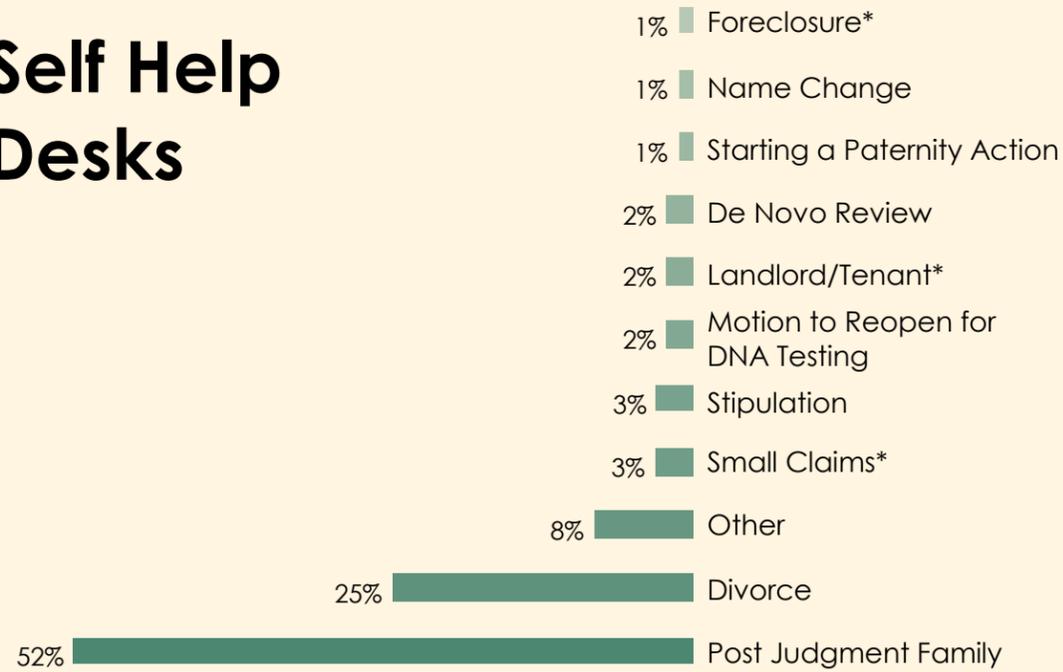
Areas of Service



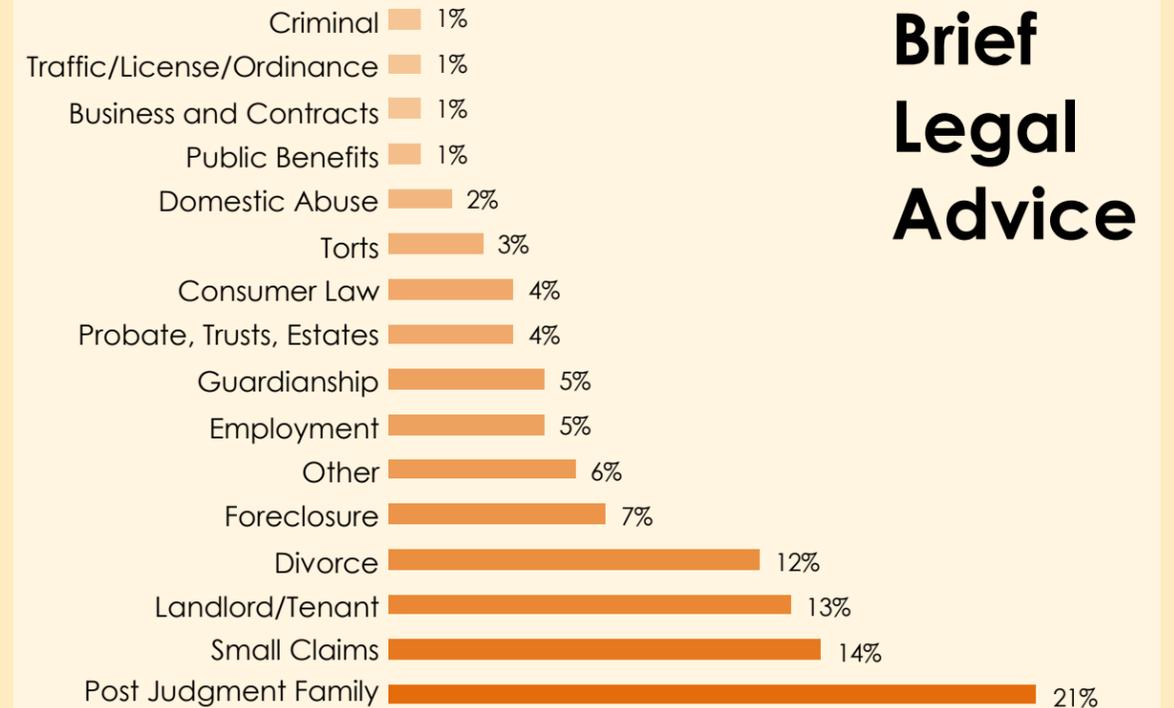
Appointments



Self Help Desks



* Small claims self help clinic was rolled in to the brief legal advice clinic in September to provide more comprehensive service.



Brief Legal Advice

CLIENT VOICES



CHARLES

"The attorney made this seem very manageable. My questions were answered fully and clearly. I know a lot more about my next steps so I'm feeling more confident I may have a shot."



LILIANA

"I feel more overwhelmed, in a good way. I feel more educated now. They were very helpful and interested in seeing the situation get resolved."



EBONY

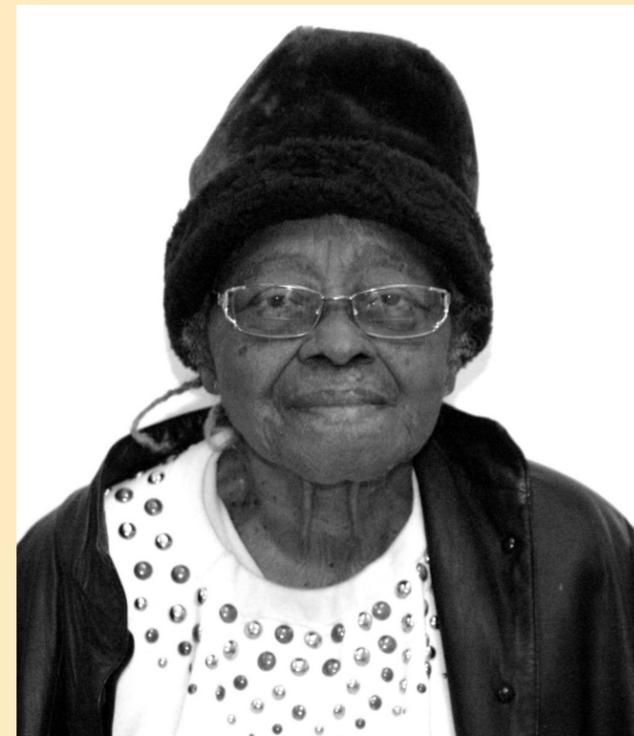
"My school did not allocate their funds correctly and now they are threatening to kick me out. Without the Milwaukee Justice Center I probably would have to withdraw from school."



JOHN

"My mom was in an apartment for 16 ½ years, left, and was not given back her security deposit. I now feel like I have established some direction for the next step."

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT



ALMA

Alma is 92 years old and lives with her disabled daughter in a duplex where she rents out the extra space. After she discovered that her tenants were using and selling drugs, she told them that they would have to move out. However, one occupant refused to leave. He would yell at Alma and her daughter and verbally harass them. After seeking help from the Milwaukee Justice Center, Alma feels "much better." She confesses that she wouldn't have had many options without the MJC, because like many other unrepresented litigants in the area, she didn't know what else to do. While at the Milwaukee Justice Clinic, Alma met **Attorney Michael Levine**, who after assisting her at the center offered to represent her *pro bono* in court. Michael said, "The MJC is an asset to the community. Many people that come for assistance have nowhere else that they can turn to for help. For the clients, the issue that brings them to us, even if it seems minor to some, can be one of the most important things that they have to deal with in their life. The MJC provides at a minimum a starting point for them to begin to understand the situation and hopefully they leave on their way to resolving the problems they are facing."

VOLUNTEER VOICES



JOHN
GRAHAM
Law Student

"Some of us are less fortunate than others, for reasons often beyond our control. Those of us in a position to help others should do so when and as we can."



STEPHEN
JACOBS
Attorney

"A lot of people who are just as capable just didn't have the same luck. If you don't give something to those who weren't as lucky, you end up with an inflated view of yourself."



KATHY
CHARLTON
Attorney

"One can make a significant difference for several people in just a couple of hours. That is very rewarding."



PHOEBE
AMBERG
Law Student

"I feel that I am very lucky to be able to afford a legal education and I want to be able to use my education to help those who cannot afford to be represented by an attorney."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

"Lawyers have a duty to ensure the justice system serves all members of our community."



Ed Sarskas

Michael Best &
Friedrich, LLP
Volunteer since 2009

Ed Sarskas has been involved with the MJC "since the early days before the MJC officially opened its doors on Friday, October 30, 2009. Judge Skwierawski had a vision for the MJC that included partnerships with Milwaukee law firms. I'm proud to be able to say that our firm, Michael Best, was committed to being involved from the very beginning." When asked why he volunteers with the MJC, Ed said, "I am passionate about volunteering at the MJC for several reasons. I like the camaraderie with my colleagues and the lawyers from other firms in town who I get to interact with through the MJC. We also get a chance to meet and work with Marquette law students which is a lot of fun. But the most important reason I choose to volunteer is that there is a tremendous need for the basic help that the MJC volunteers provide...We all have an obligation to try to improve our community. Lawyers have a duty to ensure that the justice system serves all members of our community."

PARTNERS

The Milwaukee Justice Center is a working reality because the project's volunteers, donors and friends share a common goal: to increase access to justice for all of Milwaukee's residents. The Milwaukee Justice Center thanks our partners, volunteers and major sponsors.

OUR PARTNERS:

Foley & Lardner

Hinshaw & Culbertson

Marquette University Law School

Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic

Michael Best & Friedrich

Milwaukee Bar Association

Milwaukee County

O'Neil, Cannon, Hollman, DeJong & Laing

Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren



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Habush Habush & Rottier Charitable Fund in the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region

Habush Habush & Rottier Charitable Fund in the Greater Milwaukee Foundation

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Dennis Purtell

Claude Krawczyk

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Lisa Malcore

